

**Mayor's LGBT Advisory Committee
Committee Report and Recommendations
Submitted to Mayor Anthony A. Williams
Office of Lesbian, Gay Bisexual and Transgender Affairs**

Date Submitted: October 3, 2006

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Mayor's LGBT Advisory Committee

A Billy S. Jones, Chair – Helping Individual Prostitutes Survive
Toni Collins, Vice Chair – Transgender Health Empowerment, Inc.
A Cornelius Baker – National Black Gay Men's Advocacy Coalition
Earline Budd – Miracle Hands
June Crenshaw – Black Lesbian Support Group
Charles Debnam – Ward 7 AIDS Consortium
Clarence Fluker – DC Black Pride
Jose Gutierrez – Latino GLBT History Project
Tyrone Hanley – Youth Pride
Pat Hawkins – Whitman-Walker Clinic
Robyn Holden – Business Roundtable
Keith Jackson – Cover, Inc.
Kathleen Maloy – Mautner Project
Vincent Micone III – DC Metropolitan Police Department-Gay and Lesbian Liaison Unit
Brett Parson – DC Metropolitan Police Department-Gay and Lesbian Liaison Unit
Rebecca Sawyer – Asian Pacific Islander Queer Sisters (District of Columbia)
Michael Sessa – The Center-DC's GLBT Community Center
Kevin Shipman – Addiction Prevention and Recovery Administration
Candace R. Shultis – Metropolitan Community Church
Adam Tenner – Metro Teen AIDS
Brian Watson – DC Coalition of Black Gays and Lesbians
Bruce Weiss – Sexual Minority Youth Assistance League

Dear Mayor Williams:

On behalf of the entire Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Advisory Committee, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to serve our community and the District of Columbia government. As advisors to you, the Office of LGBT Affairs, and the Council of the District of Columbia, we are pleased to submit the following report highlighting the various issues and concerns that we feel are worthy of your attention.

We have identified a set of recommendations that we think are critical to ensuring the vitality of the city's LGBT community. We believe, with your continued commitment, that these suggested actions can be accomplished prior to your leaving office. It is also our hope that this report will be included as a part of your comprehensive transition plan for the incoming mayor.

While there are many recommendations from our various subcommittees, we ask that the following be acknowledged and addressed as priority areas of concern:

1. (3.1) District health officials must undertake a comprehensive review of DC health-related data collection systems and ensure that LGBT-specific data are collected in a manner comparable to race, ethnicity and gender.
2. (4.1) Safe spaces must be created in schools and other government funded agencies, facilities, places of learning and recreation centers.
3. (2.3) The development and implementation of ongoing LGBT-specific cultural competency training of all personnel, ESPECIALLY LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS, FIRST RESPONDERS, CORRECTIONAL STAFF, AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE STAFF, is a high priority.
4. Collect data and conduct a city-wide study on District of Columbia workforce and those who are unemployed, inclusive of sexual orientation.

Addressing these key recommendations immediately will be of great benefit to all members of the LGBT community. If accepted and implemented, these actions *will* make the District of Columbia a better, more inclusive city. A city where diversity is truly valued and all residents are respected as cherished members of our thriving community.

Thank you for your years of commitment and service to the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community in Washington, DC. Your leadership and support have made a tremendous difference in the lives of LGBT residents of the District of Columbia.

Sincerely,

A. Billy S. Jones, Chair
Mayor's GLBT Advisory Committee

Cc: Councilchairman Linda W. Cropp
Councilmember Jim Graham
Councilmember Jack Evans
Councilmember Kathy Patterson
Councilmember Adrian Fenty
Councilmember Vincent Orange
Councilmember Sharon Ambrose
Councilmember Vincent Gray
Councilmember Marion Barry
Councilmember Kwame R. Brown
Councilmember David Catania
Councilmember Phil Mendelson
Councilmember Carol Schwartz

Overview of Process/Executive Summary

Pursuant to section 3(b) of the Office of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Affairs Act of 2006, effective April 4, 2006 (D.C. Law 16-89; 53 DCR 1084) the Mayor's LGBT Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee) was formed on May 30, 2006. While this was the official start date of the committee, as formed after the enactment of the Office of LGBT Affairs Act of 2006, most of the advisory committee members were involved in the prior LGBT Advisory Committee under the tenure of Wanda Alston.

The community volunteers, who had been previously involved, continued to serve by collaborating with current director Darlene Nipper, to release a summary report of the 2005 LGBT Citizen Summit. In January, this same group had an opportunity to review, comment and revise a draft report from the Summit. Once this process was completed, the committee agreed that it would use the Summit Report which reflects the interests of the city's LGBT residents, as the foundation of its recommendations to the Office of LGBT Affairs, the Mayor and the Council of the District of Columbia. In addition, advisory committee members suggested meaningful ways that the Office of LGBT Affairs could immediately begin to use the information in the report to inform its work.

Using this report (along with its findings, and subsequent recommendations) as a starting point, the committee formed four subcommittees to directly respond to the areas of concern and interests outlined therein. The subcommittees of the Mayor's LGBT Advisory Committee are:

1. Health and Social Justice
2. Public Safety and Law
3. Education
4. Economic Opportunity

Over the last several months the subcommittees developed clear mission, vision and goal statements which compliment these recommendations being submitted to the Executive Office of the Mayor, the Council of the District of Columbia and the Office of LGBT Affairs.

Four key priority recommendations are:

1. (3.1) District health officials must undertake a comprehensive review of DC health-related data collection systems and ensure that LGBT-specific data are collected in a manner comparable to race, ethnicity and gender.
2. (4.1) Safe spaces must be created in schools and other government funded agencies, facilities, places of learning and recreation centers.
3. (2.3) The development and implementation of ongoing LGBT-specific cultural competency training of all personnel, ESPECIALLY LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS, FIRST RESPONDERS, CORRECTIONAL STAFF, AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE STAFF, is a high priority.

4. Collect data and conduct a city-wide study on District of Columbia workforce and those who are unemployed, inclusive of sexual orientation.

The detailed report that follows explicitly outlines the goals and recommendations that each subcommittee developed. These are intended to address short-term/immediate needs as well as some that are clearly longer term and indicative of necessary and ongoing attention. In addition, each subcommittee report includes an overview of its mission and vision as well as a list of the subcommittee members and their areas of specific focus.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity

Vision Statement and Priorities

*It is 'Important for the business community to value and include all:
Makes better companies and better communities'*

- LGBT Citizen Summit Attendee

The mission of the subcommittee on economic opportunity is to advise and make recommendation to the Mayor, Office of LGBT Affairs and relevant District of Columbia agencies on issues related to employment, business development and other related economic issues affecting LGBT people in our city. The subcommittee will specifically address ensuring full employment opportunity for LGBT persons, employment discrimination, and the development and support of LGBT owned businesses. The subcommittee envisions a city where the contributions of all citizens are rewarded and respected.

At the LGBT Citizen Summit in April 2005 several recommendations related to economic opportunity and business development were developed (executive summary, pp 7-8). From these recommendations and others resulting from the citizen summit, the subcommittee has developed the following three priorities:

- 1.1 Collect data and conduct a city-wide study on the District of Columbia workforce and those who are unemployed, inclusive of sexual orientation: There is a need to better understand the workforce of the city and to examine those who are unemployed as well. This effort will help the city understand the needs of LGBT people in the workforce and community. Additionally, disparities in employment may also be addressed. The District of Columbia should also conduct smaller studies examining the employment experiences of select population such as transgendered persons to provide more opportunity. Where discriminatory patterns are found the District may engage in educational or enforcement initiatives of the Human Rights Act.

- 1.2 Document the economic impact of the LGBT population and LGBT special events in the District: There is a need for economic studies to be performed to fully understand and appreciate the impact that LGBT population plays in the District's development and which sectors it plays a critical role in supporting. Additionally, the impact of special events that are nationally known such as Capitol Pride, Black Pride, the HRC annual dinner, and others are not well understood. Because of the low cost of these events, there is the potential for a very high net return for the District, with greater partnership, benefiting all our citizens.
- 1.3 Support domestic partnership benefits by business: The District has made tremendous strides in granting domestic partnership benefits and rights for its citizens. These advances should be further supported and expanded in the private sector by awarding "points" when assessing contracts to business working with the city, much like the existing Local, Small, Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (LSDBE) programs.

2. Subcommittee on Public Safety and Law

Vision/Mission Statement and Priorities

Unless we deal with the ravages of crime, drugs, and violence...none of the other things we seek to do will ever take us where we need to go.

-- President Bill Clinton

The mission of the Public Safety Subcommittee of the Mayor's LGBT Advisory Committee is to promote equitable and fair enforcement within the justice system of the District of Columbia and to identify areas within public safety and victim's assistance where services to members of the LGBT community may be developed, expanded, or improved.

LGBT District residents and community leaders have identified the following immediate priorities:

- 2.1 Improve the reporting and data collection of hate crimes. There is a need to improve the reporting and data collection of hate crimes and other crimes that are LGBT-related. A public information campaign to encourage the reporting of these crimes, as well as publicizing the increased enforcement, could lead to a decrease in these crimes. Simple measures, such as the creation of a hotline to facilitate reporting and better data collection standards, could help provide the data needed to develop new solutions.

2.2 Improve services and support for victims of same-sex domestic violence. Very little is done to provide outreach and services to victims of same-sex domestic violence. New programs and resources need to be developed for this issue. One specific suggestion is the creation of dedicated AND APPROPRIATE shelter space for LGBT POPULATIONS. A challenge is drawing attention and resources to the problem of domestic violence and sexual assault within the LGBT community.

2.3 The development and implementation of on-going cultural competency training of all public safety personnel, ESPECIALLY LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS, FIRST RESPONDERS, CORRECTIONAL STAFF, AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE STAFF, is a high priority. Further, the District should impose zero tolerance for the mistreatment of LGBT citizens AND VIOLATIONS OF THE DISTRICT'S HUMAN RIGHTS LAW. The need for public safety personnel to be more sensitive when responding to emergencies and crimes involving LGBT residents, particularly transgender persons, has been repeatedly highlighted. This will improve interactions between LGBT citizens and public safety personnel.

3. Subcommittee on Health & Social Justice

Vision/Mission Statement and Priorities

Of all the forms of injustice, inequality in healthcare is the most shocking and inhumane.

~ Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The mission of the LGBT Health & Social Justice Committee is to promote and ensure achieving equitable access to appropriate and quality healthcare services for all LGBT District residents; such access shall not be adversely affected by the perceived or acknowledged LGBT status of residents.

LGBT District residents and community leaders have identified these immediate priorities:

3.1 District health officials must undertake a comprehensive review of DC health-related data collection systems and ensure that LGBT-specific data are collected in a manner comparable to race, ethnicity, and gender. Collection of data informative about the health status and healthcare needs of District residents currently does not identify LGBT persons. In the absence of such data, informed decisions cannot be made about how to make the District healthcare services system more responsive to the needs of LGBT residents.

- 3.2 Healthcare providers must be better informed about health and mental health services needs of LGBT residents, in particular, youth, seniors, lesbians, LGBT persons at heightened risk for STD and HIV/AIDS, and transgender persons. Healthcare providers must regularly participate in diversity/sensitivity training designed to promote and ensure the delivery of culturally competent healthcare services to all LGBT residents. These services must encompass prevention/early intervention, primary care, acute, chronic, and long term care.
- 3.3 District must ensure that its healthcare serves programs designed to assist vulnerable persons employ outreach, education, and enrollment efforts that are culturally competent for vulnerable LGBT persons. LGBT persons are likely to be disproportionately represented among District residents who are uninsured or underinsured; consequently, these programs must effectively promote access for vulnerable LGBT residents.

Dr. King's statement regarding inequities in healthcare explains why this committee links health with social justice. ***Access to healthcare services is necessary but not sufficient for health.*** The opportunity and ability to lead a healthy life is circumscribed by the social determinants of health; that is, the circumstances of living that affect health outcomes and health status. Due to a history of stigma and discrimination, LGBT residents are disproportionately affected by the social determinants of health.

To improve and preserve the health of all District residents substantially and permanently, District officials must address the conditions necessary for achieving healthy lives, such as affordable and safe housing, clean environments, safe neighborhoods, employment with a living wage, and health-promoting community services.

4. Subcommittee on Education

Vision Statement and Priorities

Education is for improving the lives of others and for leaving your community and world better than you found it. – Marian Wright Edelman

The mission of the Education Subcommittee of the Mayor's LGBT Advisory Committee is to promote and ensure achieving equitable and safe educational opportunities are available to District residents; such access to quality education shall not be adversely affected by the perceived or acknowledged LGBT status of residents, and to identify areas within education where services to members of the LGBT community may be developed, expanded, or improved.

LGBT District residents and community leaders have identified these immediate priorities:

- 4.1 Safe spaces must be created in schools and other government funded agencies, facilities, places of learning and recreation centers. Culturally competent programs must be developed in an inclusive manner, to the extent possible, so as not to offend youth or adults regardless of their sexual orientation. Safe spaces must extend beyond the normal hours of operation of community-based organizations. Existing supportive programs and opportunities for LGBT persons must be identified, and share/disseminate information about such programs in a more effective manner.
- 4.2 Schools and other government funded facilities, places of learning and recreation centers should employ counselors, who are available to those they serve to address problems such as bullying and intimidation and facilitate positive dialogs on tolerance, acceptance of diversity and human rights. To fully address the challenges facing LGBT youth, teachers, school administrators, parents, the School Board, City Council, Mayor's Office, community leaders, and faith-based organizations must adhere to a zero tolerance approach against bullying, intimidation and harassment. DC Public and Charter Schools should be required to report incidences of intimidation and discrimination against LGBT youth to ensure that schools establish and enforce anti-harassment policies.
- 4.3 The city should collect data on literacy rates in the LGBT community.
- 4.4 A support network for LGBT youth in foster care should be created. There should be increased collaboration between Child and Family Services, DC Public Schools, and community-based health, advocacy, and support organizations to address the issues facing older youth transitioning to independence.